

CLAIMS

Listing of claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A server connected to a user terminal via a communication network, the server receiving an information request from the user terminal and returning an input screen file including product information for display by the user terminal, the server for managing the retail sales of a product across the communication network, the server comprising:

retail sales state management means for managing retail sales state information of a product, wherein the retail sales state information of the product comprises a history of retail sales of the product including a purchase time and a purchase price for each sale of a product unit of the product;

price setting means for determining a dependency element specified for said product from among a plurality of dependency elements, each dependency element associated with a respective price determination policy and a price trend table storing a change condition indicating a current value corresponding to the price determination policy, and the price setting means for dynamically setting a current retail price of said product upon completion of each sale in accordance with the price determination policy and the price trend table associated with said dependency element, wherein said dependency element determines the current retail price, a lowest price and a highest price of said product independently from information corresponding to a current user, wherein the price determination policy specifying conditions and parameters evaluated on a portion of the retail sales state information associated with said dependency element to select predetermined changes in the retail price of the product based on the retail sales state information of said product; and

product information provision means for, upon the receipt of the information request regarding said product from the user terminal via said communication network, furnishing the user terminal with product information concerning said product and said current retail price of said product, wherein the changes in the retail price of the product are predetermined and selected by the price setting means according to a predetermined number of prior sales corresponding to the predetermined changes in the retail price.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) The server according to claim 1, wherein the price determination policy specifies conditions and parameters for changing the retail price of the product according to a number of product units sold, wherein said price setting means can dynamically set a current retail price for said product by evaluating said price determination policy using relevant information from the retail sales state information or from current retail sales status information or both, where the retail price of the product increases as the number of product units sold increases and where the retail price of the product decreases as the number of product units sold decreases.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously Presented) A server connected to a user terminal via a communication network, the server receiving an information request from the user terminal and returning an input screen file including digital content information for display by the user terminal, the server for

charging for and providing digital content via the communication network, the server comprising:

sales state management means for managing sales state information regarding sale of said digital content, wherein the sales state information of the digital content comprises a history of accesses of the digital content product including a time and retail charge for each access of a unit of the digital content;

price setting means for determining a dependency element specified for said product from among a plurality of dependency elements, each dependency element associated with a respective price determination policy and a price trend table storing a change condition indicating a current value corresponding to the price determination policy, and the price setting means for dynamically setting a current retail charge for accessing said digital content upon completion of each access of a unit of the digital content in accordance with a price determination policy and the price trend table associated with said dependency element, wherein said dependency element determines the current retail charge, a lowest retail charge and a highest retail charge of said digital content independently from information corresponding to a current user, wherein the price determination policy specifies conditions and parameters evaluated on a portion of the retail sales state information associated with said dependency element to determine the retail charge of the digital content and to determine when to change the retail charge and an amount of change in retail charge of the digital content based on the sales state information of said digital content and with current sales status information of said digital content; and

information provision means for, upon the receipt of the information request regarding said digital content from the user terminal via said communication network, furnishing the user

terminal with digital content information concerning said digital content and said current retail charge for accessing said digital content, wherein the changes in the retail charge of the digital content are predetermined and selected by the price setting means according to a predetermined number of prior accesses corresponding to the predetermined changes in the retail charge.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) The server according to claim 5, wherein the price determination policy specifies conditions and parameters for changing the retail charge according to a number of accesses of said digital content, wherein said price setting means dynamically sets said current retail charge for accessing said digital content by evaluating said price determination policy using relevant information from the sales state information or from the current sales status information or both, where the retail charge for accessing the digital content increases as the number of accesses of said digital content increases and where the retail charge decreases as the number of accesses of the digital content decreases.

8. (Previously Presented) The server according to claim 5, wherein the price determination policy specifies conditions and parameters for changing the retail charge according to ranking information regarding a popularity or evaluation of the digital content, wherein said price setting means can dynamically set the current retail charge for accessing said digital content by evaluating said price determination policy using the ranking information, as well as relevant information from the sales state information or from the current sales status information or both,

wherein the retail charge increases as a ranking of the digital content increases and wherein the retail charge decreases as the ranking of the digital content decreases.

9-19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously Presented) The server according to claim 3, wherein the price determination policy specifies conditions and parameters for increasing the retail price by a specified amount when a specified number of products units are sold, and decreasing the retail price by a specified amount when a specified number of products units have not been sold within a specified period of time.

21. (Previously Presented) The server according to claim 3, wherein the price determination policy specifies conditions and parameters for increasing the retail price by a specified amount when a specified number of products units are sold within a specified period of time, and decreasing the retail price by a specified amount when a specified number of products units have not been sold within a specified period of time.

22. (Previously Presented) The server according to claim 1, wherein the price determination policy specifies conditions and parameters for changing the retail price according to ranking information regarding the product, wherein said price setting means can dynamically set the current retail price for the product by evaluating the price determination policy using the ranking information, as well as relevant information from the retail sales state information or from the current retail sales status information or both, where the retail price of the product

increases as a product ranking increases and where the retail price of the product decreases as the product ranking decreases.

23. (Previously Presented) The server according to claim 22, wherein the ranking information is based on a retail sales ranking of the product or a popularity ranking of the product.

24. (Previously Presented) The server according to claim 7, wherein the price determination policy specifies conditions and parameters for increasing the retail charge by a specified amount when the digital content has been accessed a specified number of time, and decreasing the retail charge by a specified amount when the digital content has not been accessed a minimum number of times within a specified period of time.

25. (Previously Presented) The server according to claim 7, wherein the price determination policy specifies conditions and parameters for increasing the retail charge by a specified amount when a specified number of accesses of the digital content occur within a specified period of time, and decreasing the retail charge by a specified amount when a specified number of accesses of the digital content have not occurred within a specified period of time.